

State of Utah
Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Drinking Water

UTAH WATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



Inside this booklet . . .
- 2006 Certification Exam Schedule
- Official Utah Exam Application

Division of Drinking Water
Operator Certification Program
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FOREWORD

The Utah Drinking Water Board takes great pride in our program to certify operators of public drinking water systems. We hope that the information contained in this brochure assists you to understand and appreciate this basic public health program.

Utah's Operator Certification Program progressed from a *voluntary* to a *required* certification system in 1983 with the passage of amendments to the Utah Safe Drinking Water Act by the Utah Legislature. Rules concerning the certification of drinking water system operators within the state have been written, reviewed, revised, approved and implemented. These rules detail the requirements for, and the renewal of, certification.

The Utah Drinking Water Board appreciates the genuine hard work of the Operator Certification Commission, Division of Drinking Water staff, and the drinking water system operators and managers throughout Utah. Through our combined efforts, program implementation has been smooth and most impressive.

Thank you for your continued support of the program and your dedication to safe drinking water.

Utah Drinking Water Board

Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Drinking Water Board members:

Dale Pierson, Chair

Dianne R. Nielson, Ph.D.

Anne Erickson, Vice Chair

Charlie Roberts

Myron Bateman

Petra Rust

Jay Franson

Ron Thompson

Laurie McNeill

Kenneth Bassett

Helen Vara Graber

Kevin Brown, Executive Secretary

KEY FEATURES OF THE UTAH OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

- The Utah Operator Certification Rules are established to promote use of trained, experienced, and efficient personnel in charge of public waterworks and to establish standards whereby operating personnel can demonstrate competency to protect the public health through proficient operation of waterworks facilities.
- Utah's Operator Certification Program is authorized by Section R309-105-11 of the Utah Public Drinking Water Rules. The rules state that "All community and nontransient noncommunity water systems or any public system that employs treatment techniques for surface water or ground water under the direct influence of surface water shall have an appropriately certified operator. Refer to Section 309-300, Certification Rules for Water Supply Operators, for specific requirements."
- All public drinking water systems within the state of Utah have been assigned a complexity level (I, II, III, IV) and discipline (Treatment or Distribution) for the certification requirements of their operators. Any operator who makes independent decisions that affect the sanitary quality, safety, and adequacy of the water to their system will need to be certified to the grade of the system.
- Attendance at approved training such as workshops, seminars, classes, etc., is required for the renewal of certificates every three years.
- When an operator who is "in charge" of a drinking water system leaves that particular employment, the water system management or city/town council must notify the Operator Certification Program of this change within 10 days of the operator's departure, and replace the departing operator with an appropriately certified operator within one year.
- Should several neighboring drinking water systems wish to work together, they may hire a "regional operator" who may be "in charge" of several drinking water systems; thereby, reducing the costs of having a certified operator for each drinking water system.
- Should someone other than an operator, or an individual who is seeking employment with a Utah drinking water system (consultants, design engineers, salespersons, etc.), wish to become certified, they may take the certification examination and be issued a "Specialist Certificate." This certificate does not allow a "Specialist" to actually operate a drinking water system.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about this program, or to obtain copies of program forms, please contact the Division of Drinking Water office at (801) 536-4200.

HOW DO I BECOME A CERTIFIED OPERATOR?

By Utah law, all community and nontransient noncommunity water systems or any public system that employs treatment techniques for surface water or ground water under the direct influence of surface water shall have an appropriately certified operator in direct responsible charge of the system.

If you are an individual looking for employment within the drinking water industry in the state of Utah, you may become certified as an operator.

The only way to become certified is by taking a written or oral examination, or currently be certified as an operator in another state and apply for reciprocity. Certification is divided into two disciplines:

Distribution: There are five grade levels within the distribution discipline (small system, and grades I, II, III, IV)

Treatment: There are four grade levels within the treatment discipline (grades I, II, III, IV).

DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF EXAMINATION COVERAGE

The examinations offered in water distribution and water treatment can be categorized according to the level of ability and competency of the operator expected to take these exams.

Small System - This level is for persons running a very small system with a population of 25-500. A volunteer or elected official usually runs these community or nontransient noncommunity systems.

Grade I - This level is for persons running small systems or slow-sand filter, reverse osmosis, or similar types of small treatment facilities.* The operator at this level in a larger system will generally be closely supervised.

Grade II - This level is for persons running a system with a population of 1,500 to 5,000, or small package-type treatment plants.* This corresponds to a "lead" level position. Through experience and education, the operator has demonstrated himself independently competent in most basic tasks.

Grade III - This level is for persons running a system with a population of 5,000 to 20,000 or medium size treatment plants.* This corresponds to a "journeyman" level position and the person generally supervises and instructs others. They can, without direct supervision, operate and maintain all but the most complex systems.

Grade IV - This level is for persons running a system serving over 20,000 population or large treatment plants or plants with complex operational processes.* This level corresponds to the highest level currently available under the Utah program. It identifies that the person has demonstrated knowledge of the most complex portions of water system operation. The Grade IV operator routinely supervises work crews or groups of work crews. Budget preparation is frequently

a duty. It is assumed that a person certified at this level has enough experience and education to operate any other water system serving more than 20,000 people, in compliance with the Utah Public Drinking Water Rules and laws of the state of Utah.

*Treatment plants are rated on population served, degree of treatment, and complexity of operational processes.

HOW TO APPLY FOR AN EXAM

The operator certification exams are offered twice a year, in the months of April and November, at 16 sites throughout the state of Utah. Special exam dates are sometimes scheduled in conjunction with the Rural Water Association of Utah's operator certification training conferences (February in St. George, September in Park City). To apply for participation within the exam cycle, you need to submit an official exam application on or before the application deadline. The application must include the exam fee of \$100.00. Late applications and applications received without the required fee will not be accepted.

All applications will be processed by our staff. You will receive, by mail, a confirmation letter containing the exact date, time and location of the exam.

Certain experience requirements need to be met to obtain an "unrestricted" certificate. If you do not meet these requirements or if you are new in the drinking water industry, and you pass the exam, a "restricted" certificate will be issued. A "restricted" certificate signifies that you have passed the exam, but you lack the experience required by the Operator Certification Rules.

Upon successful completion of the exam you will be notified in writing of your score and will be issued a certificate indicating the discipline and grade level.

This certificate will be active for a three-year period. A reminder letter of renewal will be sent out three to six months prior to the expiration date of your certificate. The Utah Operator Certification Rules require that CEUs (continuing education units) be acquired by the operators to enable the certificate to be renewed.

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NERVOUS ABOUT THE EXAM? WE CAN HELP!

There are several self-paced courses available, as well as formal organized training by the Rural Water Association, American Water Works Association, Utah Valley State College, Water Environment Association of Utah, and the Division of Drinking Water. A water operator training calendar will be available online in 2006 (website to be announced).

There is also a reference textbook, video and DVD "lending library" available for your use at our office. By filling out a library application, you can borrow these items at no charge.

If you have any questions about training or training material, please contact the Operator Certification Program staff at (801) 536-4200.

Check out the
LENDING LIBRARY
Call the Operator Certification Program
staff at (801) 536-4200 for details



WHAT ARE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS (CEUs)?

The Operator Certification Rules define a CEU as "...ten contact hours of participation in, and successful completion of an organized and approved continuing education experience with responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction."

In order to ensure that the certified operators within the state remain abreast of the technological advances within our water industry, CEUs are required in order for the operators to renew their certificates. This includes operators holding "Grandparent" certificates.

The Operator Certification Rules specify the number of CEUs required per grade for renewal:

<u>Level of Certification</u>	<u>CEUs required within a three-year period</u>
Small System	2.0
Grades I and II	2.0
Grades III and IV	3.0

There is no distinction between distribution and treatment disciplines when it comes to CEUs, only the grade of the certification the operator currently holds.

CEUs can only be acquired by attending pre-approved workshops, seminars, training, and classes which have been designed to keep the operator abreast of current water supply practices as well as all new changes within the regulations and industry standards. An attendance roster from these workshops is sent to the Operator Certification Program for entry into the computer base for tracking purposes.

Upon receiving an "application for renewal," the Division of Drinking Water's computer is checked to make sure enough CEUs have been acquired by the operator to enable him to renew his certificate. If that operator lacks sufficient CEUs, the renewal of certification will be denied.

Individual CEU records for certified operators are available at the Division of Drinking Water office. Contact the Operator Certification Program staff to request your free operator record.

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OPERATOR CERTIFICATION COMMISSION

The Operator Certification Commission consists of seven members, which include higher education representatives, a treatment operator, a distribution operator, a service district representative, a metropolitan water district representative, and a rural water system representative. These seven people make decisions such as what topics you, as an operator, will be tested on; when the test will be issued; how the program will be managed; how the program will operate; and how your exam fees and renewal fees will be spent to support the Operator Certification Program.

This commission is also the body that will hear all operator appeals, and will initiate any compliance activities for enforcement of the rules concerning certified operators. This commission also proposes rules, modifications, changes, and interpretation of the rules by which operators must abide. These rules, following the public hearing process, are actually adopted by the commission.

Operator Certification Commission members:

James Callison, Chair

Arnold Smith, Vice-Chair

David K. Stevens

Bart Simons

Jay W. Franson

Craig F. Fahrni

Mark H. Clark

D. Kim Dyches, Secretary